ENG 103 RHETORIC & WRITING [online]

Instructor: Dr. Rory Lee
Email: ralee2@bsu.edu
Digital Office Hours: M-T-W 1:00-2:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to help you understand better rhetoric and writing and, in turn, become more informed consumers and producers of both. To that end, we'll cover not only foundational theories and concepts of rhetoric but also threshold concepts of writing. In so doing, we'll also pay particular attention to the importance of technology; said another way, this course invites you to see all instances of rhetoric and writing as texts that are constructed and conveyed with and through various technologies. This technological orientation to rhetoric and writing will also help you to view and understand both as inherently multimodal: that is, as a text we construct through the use of multiple modes of meaning making (e.g., written word, spoken word, static image, moving image, color, sound, layout, etc.). In addition to exploring both rhetoric and writing technologically and multimodally, we'll consider throughout the social, ethical, educational, and political implications of rhetoric and writing personally and culturally. And in particular, we'll close the semester by examining rhetoric and writing through a feminist and anti-racist lens in order to illuminate the ways identity and social justice intersect with rhetoric and writing.

To guide us in this exploration of rhetoric and writing, we'll also think with the following **big ideas**:

- rhetoric and writing are epistemic, multimodal, and tools for solving problems;
- rhetoric and writing are forms of literacy inextricably linked to technology that result in inclusion and exclusion; and
- rhetoric and writing are social processes that are identity formative: they're the means by which we construct and express both ourselves and others.

As a way to frame and arrange our work this semester, we'll move across three units:

- **Unit 1:** Rhetoric
- **Unit 2:** Writing
- **Unit 3:** Subjectivity and Social Justice

GOALS AND OUTCOMES:

Upon successfully completing this course, you'll be able to:

- think critically with and about rhetoric and writing;
- articulate and employ various rhetorical theories and concepts;
- understand writing as a discipline informed and underpinned by various threshold concepts;
- comprehend the relationship between and among rhetoric, writing, identity, and social justice;
- view rhetoric and writing through a technological and multimodal lens;
- recognize and wrestle with the implications of rhetoric and writing socially, ethically, educationally, and politically; and
- play.
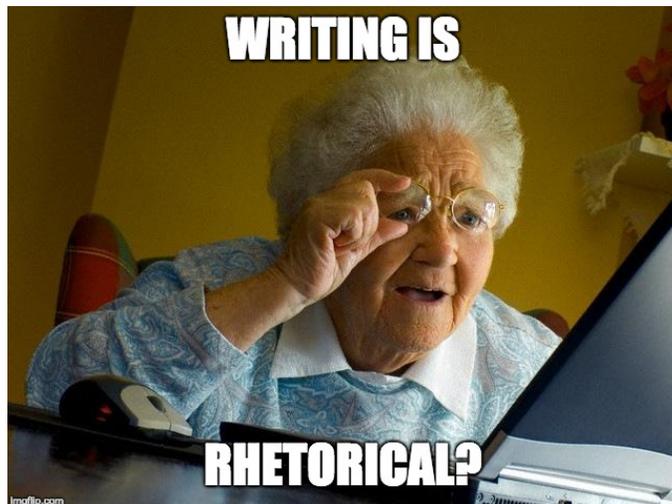
REQUIRED TEXTS:

- None: all assigned readings are available on Canvas

  A NOTE ON THE READINGS: If some of the texts we read seem impenetrable at first (especially during the first unit of the semester), don't fret: that's completely understandable. Some of the authors are dense writers; some are writing in a different moment in time and to a different audience. Most are also drawing from a different discourse community (i.e., vocabulary), and they may be expressing ideas that challenge your worldview. You might also lack an understanding of the historical context as well as the professional practices and knowledge that are informing the writer(s) and the(ir) work. I'll do my absolute best in the weekly videos I create and post on Canvas in the "Course Calendar" pages to summarize and unpack key arguments and concepts, and I encourage you to follow-up with me via email or during digital office hours if you want additional

instruction. That said, you won't be able to rely on just my (short) weekly videos. I expect you to engage meaningfully and critically with the readings, even if they're confusing and difficult to comprehend, as they'll help you understand better my videos *and* you'll need to draw on them in order to complete QQTs and Weekly Discussions and Activities.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- Project 1: Rhetorical Situation Analysis
- Project 2: Threshold Concepts of Writing
- Project 3: Selfie/Avatar Multimodal Analysis
  - Corresponding Rhetorical Rationale
- Workshops for Projects 1 and 3
- Weekly Discussions (14 weeks)
- Weekly Activities (14 weeks)
- QQTs (13 total)

EVALUATION:

To evaluate the work you complete for this class and to determine your overall grade in the course, I'll use labor-based contract grading. For many of you, this form of evaluation will be new, but the purpose of assessing your work this way is to recognize and reward the labor you produce, to clarify the expectations for your labor, and to individualize my feedback to you.

In short, you will only receive one grade: the final grade of the course. Rather than grade your work according to an allotment of points, I'll evaluate your work based on whether it meets specific standards spelled out in the "Assignment Descriptions" section below. In the ensuing chart, I detail the exact amount of labor required to earn an A, B, C, or D in the course, so you can decide which grade to work toward with a clear understanding of what it will take to achieve that grade. If you do all the work as specified below, you will receive the corresponding grade. There is no partial credit and no averaging of assignments; however, you will have the opportunity to revise your first two projects if they aren't assessed as "satisfactory."

To earn	Do **all** of the following
A	- Earn **Satisfactory** on all 3 Projects **Complete** the Rhetorical Rationale for Project 3 **Complete** 13 of 14 Weekly Discussions **Complete** 13 of 14 Weekly Activities **Complete** 12 of 13 QQTs
B	- Earn **Satisfactory** on all 3 Projects **Complete** the Rhetorical Rationale for Project 3

	• **Complete** 12 of 14 Weekly Discussions • **Complete** 12 of 14 Weekly Activities • **Complete** 11 of 13 QQTs
C	• Earn **Satisfactory** on all 3 Projects • **Complete** the Rhetorical Rationale for Project 3 • **Complete** 10 of 14 Weekly Discussions • **Complete** 10 of 14 Weekly Activities • **Complete** 9 of 13 QQTs
D	• Earn **Satisfactory** on all 3 Projects • **Complete** 7 of 14 Weekly Discussions • **Complete** 7 of 14 Weekly Activities • **Complete** 7 of 13 QQTs
F	Fail to meet all the requirements for a D.

Please note: In order to fulfill the University's Core Curriculum requirement in Writing Program courses, you must earn a C or higher to pass the course.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:

- **Projects (3 total):** For each project, I'll upload a prompt on Canvas that will not only explain the project (in more detail than the brief description below) but also clarify the expectations for earning "satisfactory." In general, one will achieve "satisfactory" on a project by formulating a coherent and appropriate response to the prompt, by making discernable the rhetorical objective (i.e., purpose) of the project, and by using an effective style and organizational scheme given your rhetorical objective. If you don't earn "satisfactory" on Projects 1 and/or 2, you can revise and resubmit them.
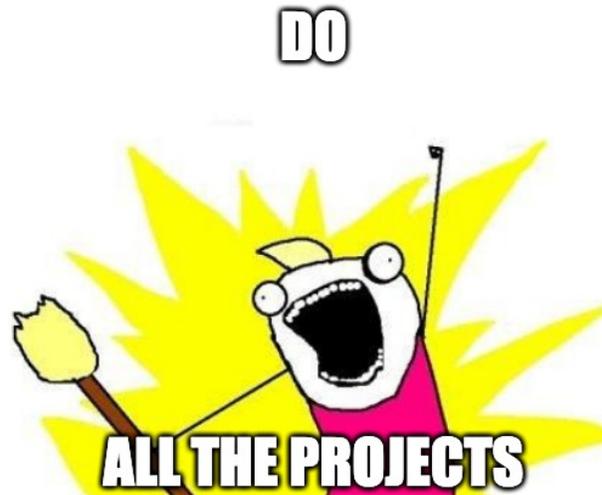

  - **Project 1 - Rhetorical Situation Analysis:** You'll analyze a "text" of your choosing using the theory of the rhetorical situation and other rhetorical concepts. Your analysis should provide insight into the contextual particulars of the "text's" situation, the purpose of the text, the rhetoric employed, and the effectiveness (or lack

thereof) of the rhetoric. [Due: Sunday, October 18th; 5-6 double-spaced pages]

- o **Project 2 - Threshold Concepts of Writing:** Drawing from the chapters you read from *Naming What We Know* (available on Canvas)*,* you'll identify and explain 3-5 threshold concepts that underpin and inform your understanding and theory of writing as well as your writing process. [Due: Sunday, November 22nd; 5-6 double-spaced pages]

- o **Project 3 - Selfie/Avatar Multimodal Analysis:** You'll select 3-4 selfies or 3-4 avatars from your social media and conduct an analysis of them, focusing in particular on the ways they construct and express particular (perhaps conflicting) identities. Unlike Projects 1 and 2, which are (mostly) alphabetic in nature, this project will be explicitly multimodal. To that end, you'll need to pick your medium, genre, and modes. In addition, you'll need to create a corresponding rhetorical rationale wherein you not only articulate but also defend the rhetorical and technological choices you made in the creation of your project. [Due: Friday, December 18th]

- **Workshops (2 total):** For Projects 1 and 3, we'll workshop your drafts in progress. This is a reciprocal process; that is, in offering feedback to your peers' drafts, you'll receive it in return. To complete this assignment, you'll need to provide generative and specific feedback to two classmates' drafts that includes both praise and constructive criticism.

- **Weekly Discussions (14 total):** Given the remote and online nature of this course, we won't be able to have face-to-face discussions of the course content and assigned readings. In lieu of that, we'll participate in various conversations online on Canvas. On Tuesday of each week, I'll post a new discussion forum, equipped with a set of potential discussion questions, within the "Weekly Discussions" page. Working in rotating groups of 8-9, you'll submit an original post by the end of the day Friday, and then post (at least) two comments by the end of the following Tuesday. In addition to satisfying the required number of posts/comments, you also need to produce quality posts/comments: ones that display intellectual engagement and curiosity, civility, good faith, and meaningful connections to the topic. Posts typically run around 2-3 paragraphs, with replies typically being 1-2 paragraphs.

- **Weekly Activities (14 total):** In an effort not only to engage with the course's content and assigned readings in multiple ways but also to prepare you to complete your three Projects, the 12 weeks of the semester that don't include workshop will contain a weekly activity (workshop will be the Weekly Activity during weeks with workshop). Posted in the "Weekly Activities" page and posted on Tuesdays, these exercises will have specific instructions and will be due by the end of the following Tuesday.

- **QQTs (13 total):** This course and its content are intended to help you both know and do: in other words, know and do rhetoric and writing in well-informed, thoughtful ways. In working toward that goal, you'll need to interact in earnest with the assigned readings— and if you don't, it'll be incredibly difficult for you to participate in the Weekly Discussions and Activities and to complete your Projects. That said, reading is typically an incentive-based activity, and most readings leave us with both insights and questions—some that seek clarification and others that are contemplative.
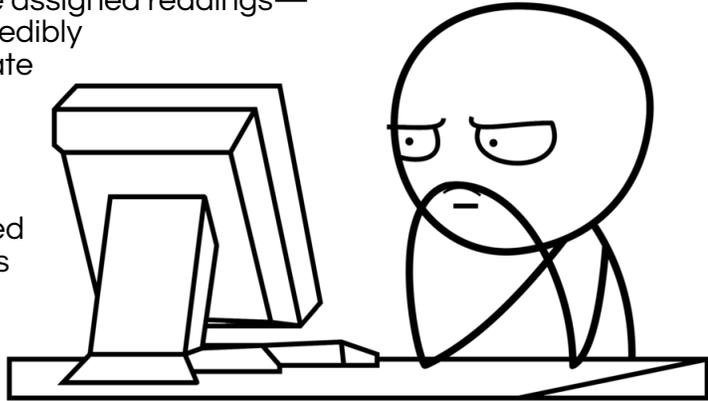
  To help you both understand better the readings and prepare for Weekly Discussions, Weekly Activities, and Projects, you'll provide "2 Questions and 1 Takeaway" (QQT) for each week's set of assigned readings. You'll post your questions and takeaway (together) to the "QQTs" page on Canvas on Tuesday, and then we'll work with those readings (including your questions and takeaways) over the following week. These questions and takeaways are valuable for three reasons:

  1. they let me know whether you're keeping up with the assigned readings (I can sniff out a bullshitted QQT, btw),
  2. they encourage you to read through a critical lens, and
  3. they provide questions, areas, and avenues for us to explore in our Weekly Discussions.

  In terms of questions, don't post hypothetical questions; that is, questions for which you already have an answer, or questions that could be answered easily through a quick Google or Wikipedia search. Instead, try to ask two types of questions:
  1. content questions: those intended to clarify and help you comprehend and understand better what you read, and
  2. critical questions: those that engage critically with the text by applying and/or critiquing the content therein.

  Lastly, I'll make an effort to respond to your questions more often than not, and sometimes, I'll create weekly videos to address a handful of pressing and recurring questions.

LATE WORK:

In order for us to maintain our schedule and for you to be a positive presence in class, you'll want to participate weekly and on time. And since this class employs

labor-based contract grading, there's no partial credit to be earned on assignments, as stated above. Consequently, Workshops, Weekly Discussions, Weekly Activities, and QQTs need to be completed on time in order to receive credit. In fact, you'll be unable to submit any of these assignments past the due date, as the submission portals will close at the deadline.

Projects, however, are different from the weekly assignments, and as such, you can submit your Projects after the deadline and still get credit. That said, if you think you're going to be late with a Project, or if you think you'll need an extension, please do contact me. I'm regularly amenable to extensions, but I want to be notified in advance and approve of them.

Lastly, extensions are available for those with extenuating circumstances (e.g., ADA, health-related issues, emergencies, severe computer and technical problems, etc.). As such, please do let me know if there's a reason you don't think you'll be able to complete any of your work on time, so I can provide you with proper accommodations if they're warranted. And if you ever have any questions or concerns about deadlines, just contact me via email.

ATTENDANCE:

This is an asynchronous online course that allows you to participate throughout the week. In general, each week's agenda and corresponding work will be posted on Canvas on Tuesday and will be due by the end of the following Tuesday. While this structure affords you flexibility, I nonetheless understand that we're all humans, shit happens, and we're in the midst of a global pandemic. As such, please do keep me updated about your situation if you find yourself struggling and/or unable to meet course deadlines. We can always talk through your situation and arrange alternative solutions to keep you involved and on track.

PLAGIARISM:

Since we're all here to learn, I assume you won't cheat or plagiarize. Although the concept of originality is fraught and frequently misunderstood and oversimplified, blatant plagiarism is still incredibly tacky. Plain and simple: *it will not be tolerated.*

If you have any questions concerning plagiarism and/or citation, please contact me. For more information regarding Ball State's policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, you can view the Handbook of Students' Rights and Responsibilities:
http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/studentrights/policiesandprocedures/studentcode/viiethicspolicy

PRIVACY (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects your privacy as a student; university personnel and faculty, which includes me, are never permitted to share information about your academic progress with anyone outside the university (e.g., your parents) without your permission. All our intellectual work and all of my feedback will be submitted through Canvas or email and thus will not be available to any audience outside of our class community. Feedback on individual projects will be between you and me solely. Discussion posts and my replies will be viewable to group members and classmates. In short, your privacy is important to me and to Ball State University and this course will adhere to FERPA guidelines.

Knock knock
Who's there? ~FERPA

FERPA who?

Sorry, I can't tell you that....

someecards
user card
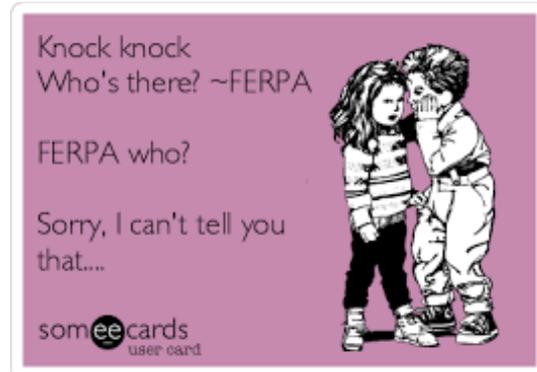
DISABILITY SERVICES:

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

Ball State University is committed to fostering and promoting a healthy learning community, and so am I. All students in this class will be treated with respect, tolerance, and equality regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender, age, or economic status. If for any reason any of you feel discriminated against in our virtual classroom based on these differences, you should reach out to me or my department chair, Patrick Collier (Links to an external site.). The Office of University Compliance or the Office of Student Rights and Community Standards may be contacted if you are not satisfied with the results of meeting with me and/or Dr. Collier. The Ball State University community believes in the strength of diversity and recognizes the importance of appreciating equality.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT:

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the various experiences and world views of those we serve. We promote a culture of

respect and civil discourse as evident in our [Beneficence Pledge](#). For Bias Incident Response service information, go to bsu.edu/multiculturalcenter/bias or e-mail mc2@bsu.edu.

THE WRITING CENTER:

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center to get additional feedback on your writing. This fall, the Writing Center is offering online appointments only due to the ongoing pandemic. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to www.bsu.edu/writingcenter. This website also contains a new chatbox feature where folks can ask quick questions about their writing without having to make a full appointment.

CIVILITY SHEET:

I will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior.

Disruptive language includes—but is not limited to—violent, belligerent, and bigoted remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, and xenophobic language. While I do not disagree that each of you have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance, bigotry, or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.

AS PARADOXICAL AS IT MAY SEEM, DEFENDING TOLERANCE... ...REQUIRES TO NOT TOLERATE THE INTOLERANT.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:

This syllabus is subject to reasonable modification given the needs of the class. If that happens, I'll keep you posted.

Course Calendar

UNIT 1: RHETORIC

Week 1: What is rhetoric?

Week 2: What is the rhetorical situation?
- Lloyd Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation"
- Richard Vatz's "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation"

Week 3: What are the rhetorical appeals?
- Jonathan Alexander and Elizabeth Losh's "What does Aristotle have to do with Me?"
- Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (excerpt)

Week 4: How does the medium impact the message?
- Plato's "Phaedrus" (excerpt)
- Siva Vaidhyanathan's "The Disinformation Machine"

Week 5: What is Post-Truth?
- Lee McIntyre's "What is Post Truth?"
- Lee McIntyre's "The Roots of Cognitive Bias"

UNIT 2: WRITING

Week 6: How is writing a social and rhetorical activity?
- Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's "Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity"

Week 7: How does writing speak to situations through recognizable forms?
- Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's "Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms"

Week 8: How does writing create and enact identities and ideologies?
- Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's "Writing Creates and Enacts Identities and Ideologies"

DUE: Rhetorical Situation Analysis

Week 9: How do writers have more to learn?

- Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's "All Writers Have More to Learn"

Week 10: How is writing also a cognitive activity?

- Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's "Writing is (Also Always) a Cognitive Activity"

UNIT 3: SUBJECTIVITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Week 11: What is (rhetorical) feminism?

- Cheryl Glenn's "Mapping the Silences, or Remapping Rhetorical Territory."
- bell hooks' "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression"

Week 12: How do voice and identity intersect?

- Gloria Anzaldúa's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"
- Jacqueline Jones Royster's "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own"

Week 13: What is anti-racism?

- Ibram X. Kendi's "Definitions"
- Ibram X. Kendi's "Dueling Consciousness"

DUE: Threshold Concepts of Writing

Week 14: How is race a construct?

- Ibram X. Kendi's "Power"
- Ibram X. Kendi's "Biology"

Week 15: Closing time

DUE: Selfie/Avatar Multimodal Analysis (and corresponding Rhetorical Rationale)